

SYNOPSIS OF
"THE SHADOW OF STALINGRAD"
By Graf Von Einsiedel

Chapter I, Prisoner

An exciting picture of the air war over the Don Bend in the summer of 1942 told from the point of view of a 21-year-old pilot with thirty-five RAF and Russian planes to his credit. Emphasis on the overwhelming numerical superiority enjoyed by Russians. This is followed by details of his capture and early interrogations—mostly brutal—and the miseries of his trip to prison camp on the upper Volga.

Chapter II, Anti-Fascist

The account of his meeting with the Emigre German Communists and the pressures placed upon him by subtle Russian political officers to get him to renounce Germany. Chief stress was on hopelessness of German situation unless Hitler was overthrown. Tricked into signing one appeal, author then confronted with fact he had committed treason, and stumbled steadily in the direction his captors desired.

Chapter III, The National Committee

In the late winter of 1943, he notes with amazement luxurious treatment accorded Von Paulus and the other Generals on their trip from Stalingrad to the prison camp. This was contrasted with an 80 per cent death rate in some of the neighboring camps for enlisted men. He alleges that on the personal intervention of Stalin, the liquidation of numerous NKVD authorities produced a reform in POW camp administration that made life maintainable. The initial Comme approach was definitely on the popular front basis welcoming all anti-Nazis. Was lead by Ulbricht, but most effective missionaries were the Russians because they were less doctrinaire and more subtle in appreciating the patriotic urge of the officers than were the German emigres. Manifesto of the committee for Free Germany was finally signed by a group approximately one-third pro-Communist expatriates, one-third officers and one-third enlisted men.

Chapter IV, The Officers' League

Apparently Ulbricht and his people became increasingly insufferable to the officers to Einsiedel and others of his aristocratic and military background were sent to lecture at the various camps; but, as he started to make converts, the fanatical Nazis reacted with Koje Island-type terroristic countermeasures. In the summer of 1943, Von Seydlitz became the first Senior Officer to weaken but he would not agree to an officers' declaration until the deserters had been kicked off the Free Germany Committee and a policy adopted favoring a Palace revolution so as to avoid disintegration and 1918 type-soldier councils. League was finally formed in September 1943 with Paulus abstaining, though his G-2 Van Hooven played a leading part.

Chapter V, The Front

This deals with Einsiedel's activities as a front-line propaganda unit operator. Examples of doctrinaire prejudice ruining propaganda are given, such as crediting Einsiedel with only three rather than thirty-five planes shot down, but still mentioning his Knight's Cross, thus making the entire leaflet look phony. Propaganda efforts succeeded occasionally, thought effect was limited because many Germans surrendering with leaflets were butchered by the ill-disciplined Russian troops.

Interesting example of psychological technique is the speed with which captured Germans were confronted with members of Einsiedel's team so that they could be converted while the shock of battle and capture was still upon them. Cf. our treatment of battle psychosis.

Chapter VI, Politics

By the spring of 1944, less than one-third of the Stalingrad officers had joined the movement. Even this group shrank as a result of the shock at learning about the proposed Oder-Neisse adjustments of the Polish frontier and the failure to induce surrender by the units cut off in the Cherkassy Pocket. Some of the leaders actually threatened to renege on the deal. Melnikov's handling of this episode makes interesting reading, (pp. 145-7).

Chapter VII, Anti-Fascist School

The failure of the July 1944 plot apparently lead the high authorities to lose faith in the United Front approach and rely more heavily on proletarians and detailed supervision by NKVD personnel. Most promising students were recruited and sent to a special school where controls were established over them by extortion of full-life confessions in order to get blackmail material. Interrogation invariably persisted until the subject had admitted at least something morally, and usually sexually, degenerate on his record.

It was only in August of 1944 when Von Paulus was finally won over (by a gruesome coincidence on the same day Von Witzleben was strangled).

Chapter VIII, Collapse

Even the hard Emigre Communists, and many of their Russian mentors, were revolted by what they saw in the wake of Rokossovsky's advance in East Prussia in the winter of 1944-45. Einsiedel observed massacres of the captured Vlasov legionaries. Apparently Russian officers were completely unable to control the excesses of their troops, though many of them died in attempting to impose some restraint. Einsiedel was detained and then returned to Moscow apparently because of his toc-frank complaints about these ravages.

Chapter IX, Dissolution of the National Committee

After the surrender, the Committee was apparently left dangling in the air with no mission. It spent its time wrangling over question of the lost provinces and the future of Germany. Only a few trusted fanatics were allowed to return to Germany. Einsiedel proposed a real function for the Committee and was promptly threatened with a "ride east."

Chapter X, The Ghost of Stalingrad

This chapter is somewhat out of chronological order and is essentially a "profile" of Von Paulus and explanation of his conduct at Stalingrad. Some interesting sidelights also on Seydlitz and Muller. Seydlitz has apparently been missing since 1949, whereas Paulus was last reported as lecturing at the Moscow Military Academy.

Chapter XI, Return Home

Einsiedel spent the year from the spring of 1946 through the spring of 1947 in the main Generals' camp where he found almost all had recanted their anti-Hitlarian actions, if any, in 1944 and 1945 and had submitted to a redemption procedure by Courts of Honor comprised of Generals captured only at the final surrender.

In relating his experiences traveling from Moscow to Berlin, he noted that all fellow passengers were convinced that Germany was a better place to live than Russia. He recounts the usual spate of tales of corruption and starvation in the POW camps as picked up from other returning prisoners. He noted the terrible abuse of machinery being transported out of East Germany and incompetence in reerecting it. At the end of this chapter (p.251) is an interesting thumb-nail sketch of his former colleague, an ex-Nazi named Bachler, as he appeared as Minister of the Interior for Brandenburg—a perfect character out of Koestler in iciness and self-righteous opportunism.

Chapter XII, East Sector of Berlin

This contains an interesting picture of the life of an editor of the Tagliche Rundschau and the rationalizations through which intelligent and observant Communists went to justify the evils of the regime they were supporting.

Pages 273 et seq. are a rather shocking picture of the way he was handled when taken into custody by U.S. authorities on a trip to our Zone. After six months in jail and a couple of trials he was finally released and returned to the East Zone where shortly thereafter he had his final awakening, resigned from the Paper and Party and left for the West.

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